



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ZOO KEEPERS

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

8024 TOMMY DRIVE • SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92119

(714) 463-0738

Dear AAZK Member,

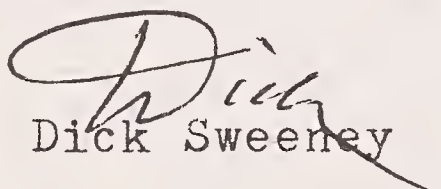
I don't know how to put seven years of gratitude into one letter, except to make use of the only phrase available for this important obligation.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as executive officer of AAZK since its inception; a tenure of reward, heartbreaks, and periods of organizational turmoil. During the course of hundreds of hours of AAZK business, I would estimate that more than 15,000 pieces of mail have been processed, and countless subjects pertaining to AAZK operation have been discussed over my desk. Some of this business, controversial in nature, was not always pleasant. However, it's part of the position. I have had to make decisions that have been easily misunderstood, mistrusted, and unpopular. This too, is unfortunately unavoidable, and part of the position. But, I can step down from AAZK office knowing I did my best. I don't look back at the times of trouble, I remember the notes and letters of praise from many of you. For all the headaches and problems of operating the AAZK office, my aspirin was the scribbled note at the bottom of a renewal slip that said, "Thanks for AAZK, keep up the good work."

It has always been my belief that our zoos and aquariums need highly skilled, concerned animal care personnel. AAZK has afforded us a means to spread this kind of attitude. It (AAZK) has thrived in some areas and failed in others. We have had difficulty in getting rid of the age-old syndrome of bitching, and are still entwined in a self-centered approach by people who fail to see the need for a team effort. But, AAZK has been instrumental in bringing us closer to a needed liaison between management and the operative members of this team. Zoo keepers still have some growing to do, and AAZK can and should help them. It will, but only by your support. The development as professional animal care personnel can only come about by unity, not by a divided force. I sincerely hope AAZK will endure.

Now it's time for me to scribble my note to each of you. "Thanks for your friendship, your support of my judgements, and for allowing me to bug you, take you away from your families, and for your kindness to me and Virginia." Keep up the good work, and most important of all, keep AAZK.

Sincerely yours,


Dick Sweeney

P.S. My special thanks to Brian Joseph, Editor of "The Keeper," for affording me the opportunity to include this letter to you.

DICK SWEENEY RESIGNS OFFICE

Effective December 31, 1974, Dick Sweeney, San Diego, California, will step down as executive officer of AAZK. Dick will pursue a managerial position in the zoo field, and devote some future time to writing.

Dick has held the top post in AAZK since 1967, serving as Executive Secretary-Treasurer, and as a Board member since the inception of the organization. He was instrumental in the founding of AAZK, and served as President of the San Diego Zoo chapter before becoming President of the national organization.

AAZK LOSES A FRIEND

Mr. C.F. Tannahill, an Associate member of AAZK, and sales representative for ZU PREEM died suddenly of a heart attack on October 15, 1974.

AN AMAZON LIVED 46 YEARS

On 14 February, 1928, a Yellow-crowned Amazon, Amazona ochrocephala, estimated to be six months of age, was purchased in a pet store in Iowa. This bird, named "Coco" by its owner, Mr. Donald Hodge of Danville, Illinois, mimicked a good many words. The diet consisted of toast and coffee crackers, peanuts, bread and milk, sunflower seeds, vegetables and fruits; also bacon, ice cream, jello, popcorn, and cooked corn on the cob were offered. On 24 August, 1974, "Coco" was donated to the Indianapolis Zoo.

On 10 October, 1974, "Coco" died of liver abcess. Thus, this bird lived in captivity for 46 years, 7 months and 26 days.

---Ken Kawata

ZOO & AQUARIUM CAREERS

This phamphlet has been printed by AAZPA in response to the demand from zoos and aquariums for a career brochure. These institutions receive numerous requests for this type of information. Some of the statistics contained in the phamphlet show: There are 197 zoos and 39 aquariums in the United States. Twenty-one of the aquariums are associated with zoos. There are a grand total of 237,567 mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fishes in these 236 different institutions. In the 236 zoos and aquariums there are 6,428 full-time employees and 4,231 part-time employees in all the various job classifications. These are paid employees, and do not include volunteer help. The phamphlet outlines geographical distribution of zoos and aquariums (and thus employment), position classifications, expected salaries and other pertinent information for people who are interested in zoo work as a career. For those interested in obtaining one of these brochures or if you know of someone who is interested, please contact Brian Joseph, Editor. Cost: 10¢ each or 5¢ for 100 and up.

"Herpetological History and Husbandry at the Philadelphia Zoo"

by J. Kevin Bowler, Curator of Reptiles (March 1974)

(Parts of this article have been reprinted from America's First Zoo, the publication of the Philadelphia Zoological Garden, with permission from the Garden Zoological Society.)

In the spring of 1969, Roger Conant (the Philadelphia Zoo's first Curator of Reptiles, appointed in 1935) saw the realization of more than 20 years of dreaming and planning when the old Reptile House was demolished to make room for a modern structure. It was during the hiatus between the old and the new building that Dr. Conant decided to review his policies and practices in reptile and amphibian management.

The new Reptile House was completed in October, 1971, but did not open to the public until March, 1972. We must thank Dr. Conant for allowing us six months to "iron out the bugs" and to acclimate both the animals and the keepers to the new facility.

The animals in our new Reptile House are exhibited in naturalistic habitats, which are undoubtedly of greater educational value than traditional reptile cages. While the biological value of naturalistic habitats remains a controversial subject in the zoo world, many herpetologists feel that such displays are a definite factor in the successful maintenance of some reptiles and amphibians. In many instances, the physical and psychological needs of the animal are best satisfied by this technique of exhibition.

Having operated our modern facility for almost two and a half years, we can now report that our naturalistic, partly fiberglass displays are no more difficult to maintain than the traditional cages. In fact, in many cases they are considerably easier to service because the fiberglass surfaces do not stain and can be cleaned and disinfected with little effort. In addition to the fiberglass substrate used in some areas, natural materials such as pebbles, sphagnum moss, wood mulch (steamed licorice root), and various sands are used. Tepid water (80°) is circulated in most of the exhibits, and in some, it is filtered and recirculated.

The waterfalls present in some of the displays serve a functional as well as a decorative purpose. The falling water and the resultant pools allow some lizards and arboreal snakes to acquire water much as they would in the wild. The level of humidity is controlled by the temperature, amount of ventilation, and the volume and surface area of water present in any given situation. We also mist the animal enclosures with water and include real plants in as many areas as possible in order to maintain required humidity levels.

Plastic vegetation is used to create special effects or in those situations where real plants would be unduly damaged by the animals. However, natural vegetation is present in over 50% of the exhibits and in some of the holding cages. It is interesting to note that in enclosures containing both artificial and natural plant material, the animals usually choose the real plants for hiding or resting.

Philadelphia's Reptile House (continued)

The buildings' eight thermostatically controlled temperature zones enable us to vary temperatures from approximately 50 to 100 . We can supplement any enclosure within a particular zone with heat lamps and/or ultraviolet radiation to meet the needs of the animals therein. In some instances temperature cycles and photo-periods are regulated to stimulate breeding behavior.

Our new Reptile House should provide the physical and mechanical facilities needed for successful reproduction. This coupled with our increased knowledge of reptilian and amphibian natural history and behavior should bode well for the future. The new building has already seen 16 instances of reproduction, many of which resulted from captive breeding.

In general, manufactured diets have a limited application in herpetological husbandry. Many herptiles feed on whole animals such as rodents, anoles, frogs, and crickets, and if high-quality whole animals are offered, little or no dietary supplements are needed. Prime examples of herptiles that are maintained on a whole animal diet are the snakes and amphibians. The crocodilians (when not being fed whole rodents) are given horsemeat, dressed chicken, and fish, to which dietary supplements are added. The herbivorous and omnivorous turtles and lizards do require regular vitamin and mineral supplementation. This is provided in the form of two concentrated diets--Diet A (a mixture of meat, cereal grains, brewers' yeast, vitamins and minerals) and Meat-Gelatin Mix prepared and developed by the Zoo's Penrose Research Laboratory. A diet of swuid, clams, meat-gelatin mix, and smelt is provided for the sea turtles.

In the Reptile House, it is not only what you feed, but HOW you feed it and under what environmental conditions, that makes the difference between success and failure. Many techniques and ploys are used to induce nervous and delicate specimens to feed. However, it is not within the scope of this article to describe our diets and feeding practices in depth.

Sanitation and preventative medicine are as important to a successful husbandry program as is the purveying of top-quality diets. It is the daily procedure for keepers in the Reptile House to disinfect all tools and instruments in an iodine solution after cleaning each cage. They also use individual pieces of paper toweling for each enclosure.

All new arrivals are quarantined for an indeterminate length of time. An animal is considered ready to join the established collection only when it is feeding regularly and exhibits no clinical signs of disease. When an animal shows signs of developing a disease, appropriate therapeutic measures are initiated immediately. The use of broad spectrum antibiotics and other drugs has largely eliminated respiratory infections, necrotic stomatitis (mouth infection), and amoebiasis (amoebic dysentery) in our reptile collection. Since the introduction of Shell's No-Pest Strips, mites have ceased to be a problem.

The Penrose Research Laboratory autopsies all animals that die in the Zoo. The primary purpose is to determine the cause of death, thereby providing knowledge to improve preventative medical procedures and

Philadelphia's Reptile House (continued)

therapeutic treatments. Autopsies can also determine whether a clinical diagnosis was correct or incorrect.

We do not forcibly handle or restrain an animal unless an emergency situation necessitates such methods. The pinning of snakes is not permitted, and when venomous snakes must be moved or undergo medical treatment, snake hooks and various containers and chambers are used. The application to reptiles of the sophisticated techniques developed for the chemical restraint of mammals has eliminated the stress and trauma for both animal and keeper in many formerly hazardous operations.

The success of a zoo's animal husbandry program can be measured by the general health, longevities, and reproductive success attained in the collection. Improvement of these three factors has been, and will continue to be, the principal objective of the entire Animal Department at the Philadelphia Zoo.

---Editor's Note: This last paragraph should summarize the goals of all conscientious keepers. Remember that whenever any of these goals of general health, longevity and reproductive success of animals in your care are achieved, you should take as much pride in this as the veterinarian, curator or director for it all depends on you. Take pride in your work!

REPTILES LIVING 25 YEARS+ AT THE PHILADELPHIA ZOO

SPECIES	YRS.	MOS.
*Alligator snapping turtle (Macroclemys temmincki)	58	9
**Alligator snapping turtle	57	0
Galapagos tortoise (Geochelone elphantopus)	41	10
*Asiatic land turtle (Geoemyda trijuga)	39	8
**Boa constrictor (Boa constrictor constrictor)	37	5
*Australian side-necked turtle (Chelodina longicollis)	35	1
*African dwarf crocodile (Osteolaemus tetraspis)	33	5
Geoffroy's side-necked turtle (Phrynops geoffroanus hilairi)	33	2
*Mississippi map turtle (Graptemys kohni)	32	6

Reptile Longevities (continued)

SPECIES	YRS.	MOS.
Mexican burrowing snake (<i>Loxocemus bicolor</i>)	31	2
Ball python (<i>Python regius</i>)	28	10
*Galapagos tortoise (<i>Geochelone elephantopus</i>)	28	4
Galapagos tortoise	28	4
Central American boa (<i>Boa constrictor imperator</i>)	27	6
*Sonoran mud turtle (<i>Kinosternon sonoriense</i>)	27	0
Aldabra tortoise (<i>Geochelone gigantea</i>)	26	10
Mugger crocodile (<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>)	26	9

* - no longer living

** - originally in another collection.

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31, 1974, ALL AAZK CORRESPONDENCE SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Mr. Edward A. Roberts
AAZK
228 Ferry Street
Everett, MASS 02149

MEMBERSHIPS, REGULAR LETTERS, RENEWALS, REQUESTS FOR GESTATION BOOKS, GENERAL INFORMATION, ETC. SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THIS ADDRESS.....

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Mr. Edward A. Roberts

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NATIONAL AAZK BULLETIN

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NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1974

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